



The Town of Centreville  
Centreville Town Council  
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Centreville, MD 21617

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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The past year has been a very difficult one for the Town of Centreville. We as town officials have worked for countless hours fighting legal battles that have been launched against the town, dealing with wastewater treatment plant operational issues, and creating a capacity management plan to deal with our infrastructure. In the last year we have hired a new town manager, undertaken a study of our sewer infrastructure to inform us where improvements and repairs are necessary, replaced our aging wastewater treatment plant and completed the annual audit of our town's finances. Because the town's comprehensive plan states our desire to preserve the environment and our history, the Town has also adopted the Watershed Restoration Action Strategy and the Stories of the Chesapeake Heritage Area.

But unfortunately, perhaps what the public has heard the most about in the last year are negative stories in certain media. While it is always a benefit to the public to hear about local government through the avenue of the press and while certain media have reported in a fair and unbiased manner, there are clear exceptions to objective journalism in our midst. These 'news' reports have reflected poorly on Centreville as they have shown fragments of facts and biased bits of information, providing neither background nor context for their one-sided 'reports.' For example, only one television station has reported on Centreville issues; there is probably a reason why no other station has been reporting. These reports are being fueled by sensationalism and negativity.

One example of this is the recent coverage of an old farm dumping site found near the town's spray irrigation field. When the town found out about this (while a TV camera was running), we called the state's emergency environmental unit, who came out and cleaned up the site the same day, taking water and soil tests to be sure the site was safe for nearby residents. The fact that the containers were over a decade old, were empty and were immediately cleaned up is not a fact you see in the 'news report.'

The town holds regular meetings twice a month and work sessions twice a month, in addition to other public hearings on specific issues. We are always interested in hearing from our citizens. Although we have been accused of 'not listening,' in fact we listen thoroughly and often. We also appreciate the support and feedback from our citizens who have remained engaged in the issues without drawing unwarranted and undeserved negative attention toward the town. We understand that as elected officials our decisions and policies are open to

scrutiny; however when attacks become personal it is counterproductive and simply unfair to us as individuals.

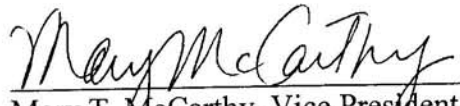
A few hypothetical questions. If a town resident comes to town meetings and reads the newspaper during the meeting, stopping only long enough to give his own negative statement at the end, is this participating in government? If a town resident walks the streets insulting and criticizing the town, wearing t-shirts falsely accusing town leaders (who are elected by our citizens) of being corrupt or criminal, is this a healthy interest in the success of the town? If someone learns of a potential environmental hazard, does not report it to the town as the property owner but waits several weeks to announce it to the media instead, is this true concern for the environment or for the citizens? If a town resident is not working in any way toward a positive solution for the good of Centreville, is this not then *part of the problem*?


A healthy dose of 'questioning authority' and discussion and debate about government are pillars of our democracy and symbols of the foundation of our country. We always welcome and appreciate citizen input; we are here to serve the citizens who elect us. But there is a point when input becomes harassment, where debate is left behind in favor of witch hunting. When that line is crossed it simply becomes difficult for the town to function in a meaningful way. If we have to spend the majority of our time answering to accusations designed around sound bites for the evening news, we are not able to serve all of our citizens to the best of our ability. There is plenty of work to be done, and the three of us have shown that we are willing to roll up our sleeves and do the hard work. We do not have time for Monday morning quarterbacking- we are actually playing the game and always trying to do better for next Sunday.

Residents of Centreville, whether they have lived here all their lives or moved here in recent times, have a common goal of wanting what is best for our hometown and moving into the future in a positive direction. We have an opportunity to turn our past challenges into future successes and look forward to serving our constituents by restoring pride in our community. In response to the many supportive comments we have heard from the vast majority of town citizens, we can say that we are all simply tired of stormy weather in this town. It's time for the sun to shine again in Centreville.

  
Donna S. Turner, President

5/23/05

  
Mary T. McCarthy, Vice President

  
Norman P. Pinder, Jr., Council Member